

ARTICLE 23: The proposed rezoning of Butterfield Terrace (Article 23) from R-N to R-G is a bad idea for three fundamental reasons:

First, it's "development creep," and that's creepy. It threatens to transform pieces of zones a little at a time, gradually destroying the integrity of a neighborhood and creating uncertainty for everyone about the future zoning of their property. For this reason, its cousin, spot zoning, is prohibited.

Second, it would deprive neighbors of an important buffer from the University and from the potential problems of apartment and townhouses—allowed in R-G but not in R-N. Although UMass family housing apartments once existed on the west side of Butterfield Terrace, they were for graduate students, faculty, and staff, and they were regulated by the University. In this case, the ad-hoc re-zoning requested in Article 23 would be one further step in tipping neighborhoods near the University into student ghettos from the existing mixture of families, faculty, administrators, and other residents, including students. And make no mistake about it: Like the massive Kendrick Place development, which the websites for the builder and architect defined as student housing notwithstanding the developer's protests, Butterfield Terrace rezoned would become primarily student housing.

Third, rather than address in a small way the demand by UMass students for off-campus housing, a Butterfield Terrace with apartments and townhouses will only heighten that demand: It would make off-campus housing near the University more and more attractive to students who otherwise are stuck on campus or must live farther away. And there are thousands of such students, a number far beyond the capacity of neighborhoods bordering the campus to house unless they become student ghettos.

My recommendation to all Town Meeting members: Don't allow development creep—a clear and present danger--to crowd out historic, family friendly neighborhoods so central to the distinctive nature of this Town. Vote NO on Article 23. And if, as expected, the petitioner requests that Article 23 be referred to the Planning Board, vote NO as well. It's a bad idea that can't be fixed.

John O. Fox, Precinct 10